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SUBJECT: SOUTHERN KORDOFAN - LACK OF INTEGRATION MAY SPUR VIOLENCE

REF: KHARTOUM 967

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SUMMARY
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11. (SBU) BEGIN SUMMARY. In a July 4 telephone conversation, Dr. Ahmed Saed, SPLM Minister of Finance for Southern Kordofan State told a USAID field officer that the security situation in the Nuba Mountains IQQ',H{&y=utee, and thus is charged with finalizing the recruitment and salary payment of administrators in the SPLM-administered areas of Southern Kordofan.

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LACK OF INTEGRATION FUELING NUBA FRUSTRATION
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13. (SBU) On July 4, a USAID field officer spoke by telephone with Dr. Ahmed Saed, the Southern Kordofan State Minister of Finance. During the conversation, Dr. Ahmed expressed concern that his state is on the brink of widespread armed conflict. According to Dr. Ahmed, the state has seen increasing militarization and armed conflict since the SPLM pullout of the state census. The pace quickened after the mid-May outbreak of fighting in Abyei. Further, Dr. Ahmed noted that, as of late June and early July, Nuba SPLA soldiers have been returning from deployment in White Nile state, the Popular Defense Forces have been remobilizing, and SAF troops are building up north of Kadugli town. (NOTE: The UN also has signaled a deteriorating security situation in Southern Kordofan, and on June 30, elevated the state from security phase II to III. END NOTE.)

14. (SBU) Dr. Ahmed indicated that Southern Kordofan's Nuba population is becoming increasingly frustrated by the lack of CPA implementation. As a result, the Nuba are losing confidence that the CPA will result in an acceptable situation in the state, and they have begun to consider returning to conflict as a means of acquiring adequate rights. (NOTE: The Nuba SPLM's recent rejection of state census results is a further example of their dismissing CPA implementation in Southern Kordofan. END NOTE.)

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15. (SBU) According to Dr. Ahmed, two weeks ago, 100 SPLM police officers arrived in Southern Kordofan's capitol Kadugli, and threatened a return to violence if they were not paid salaries. The SPLM police claim to have 3,000 officers. Currently, the GOSS pays the salaries for 1,500 to maintain security, until they are integrated into the state GNU. The GOSS does not support the remaining 1,500 police officers because the GOSS argues that the additional officers joined the police force after the signing of the CPA.

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16. (SBU) According to Dr. Ahmed, the primary measure of CPA implementation and the main source of increasing frustration among the Nuba as the lack of progress to integrate Southern Kordofan. Therefore, he sees the current period as the last chance to maintain peace in the state, noting that "if there is no integration in the next two months, then it is over." When pressed to clarify this, Dr. Ahmed indicated that no integration would happen after two months because after that, the Nuba will have returned to conflict. When asked what could be done to avoid this, Dr. Ahmed replied that if state administrative and police integration move forward immediately and people in SPLM-administered areas know of the progress and of future steps toward integration, the current situation would calm.

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FORMER SPLA GENERAL FUELS INCREASING TENSIONS

17. (SBU) Dr. Ahmed also noted that the arrival in Southern Kordofan of Ismail Jalab Khamis has further agitated the current situation. According to Dr. Ahmed, Ishmael, the former SPLM governor and SPLA general of Southern Kordofan arrived in Kadugli July 2 and has been traveling to SPLA-controlled areas of the state, particularly the former SPLA garrison towns of Tima and Julud. Dr. Ahmed indicated that the nature of Ismael's trip is unknown, raising local suspicions and tensions. (NOTE: Ismail is widely regarded as having been an ineffective governor, but an astute military planner, which is likely behind the above-mentioned suspicions. END NOTE.)

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PLANS TO MITIGATE SITUATION

18. (SBU) According to Dr. Ahmed, in order to mitigate the current situation in Southern Kordofan, the state government needs to immediately include SPLM administrators and police on the GNU payroll and follow up with a local capacity-building program. Two committees have been recently set up to facilitate state integration: the Administrative Integration Committee, chaired by Dr. Ahmed and tasked with finalizing recruitment and paying administrators in SPLM-administered areas; and the Police Integration Committee, chaired by Phillip Mundari, the head of Southern Kordofan's SPLM police, and tasked with finalizing state police integration.

19. (SBU) A national committee, including Malik Agar, SPLM governor of Blue Nile State, Abbas Juma, the SPLM's GNU State Minister of Interior, and Ahmed Neroun, NCP Advisor to the President, arrived in Kadugli on July 5 to discuss state integration. In hopes of calming the current situation, the SPLM members of the joint SPLM-NCP state committees plan to focus on immediately informing administrators and police in SPLM areas about the integration process. According to Dr. Ahmed, SPLM police are currently being mobilized at assembly points in Um Sirdida (South of Kadugli and north of the SPLM/A headquarters at Kauda) and Julud (north of Kadugli) to be briefed on integration plans and to verify force numbers. (NOTE: On July 9, Malik Agar announced that 1,500 SPLM police are being integrated into the state GNU. END NOTE.) In addition, committee members are writing proposals to request logistical and technical support for the integration process. In the coming days, the proposals will be

presented to USAID for consideration and/or referral to other potential donors.

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POSSIBLE POLITICAL BLOCKAGES TO INTEGRATION
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¶10. (SBU) Dr. Ahmed stated that the joint integration committees plan to prepare information on integration and present it to the NCP Governor, accompanied by a request that the governor issue decrees to implement the process. (Reftel describes how the SPLM Deputy Governor's inaction has delayed integration, leading to Dr. Ahmed's recruitment.) During the July 4 phone call, Dr. Ahmed remarked that the current undertaking will be a final test of the governor's will to integrate Southern Kordofan. If he fails to act, the Nuba will interpret this as a sign that the CPA never will be implemented.

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(NOTE: In recent weeks, Bellandia, the NCP Nuba chair of the state parliament has been calling for the NCP Misseriya Governor to step down from his post, citing his biased hiring and development policies, which have marginalized the Nuba with respect to Misseriya. The governor's failure to issue the integration decrees likely would increase Nuba calls for him to step down. END NOTE.)

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COMMENT
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¶11. (SBU) The mid-May SPLA-SAF fighting in Abyei, combined with state-specific factors, has increased tension and militarization in the Nuba Mountains. By early July, factions of both armies and proxy militias were positioned in the vicinity of Kadugli, giving even a local clash the potential to erupt into widespread armed conflict. Widespread conflict in Southern Kordofan is likely to be more complex than the Abyei situation, potentially involving an array of factionalized armed groups including forces from the SAF, various competing SPLA factions, Hawazma and Misseriya PDF, SPLM and government police and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). If violence erupts in Southern Kordofan, the effects also would likely be more widespread and more difficult for national actors to mitigate and to effectively restore order than the previous, more linear conflict in Abyei. The recent agreement to integrate 1,500 SPLM police should ease the threat of this group destabilizing Southern Kordofan. That it took intervention by a committee including the governor of Blue Nile state to resolve the issue highlights the weak leadership capacity in the Southern Kordofan state government (and this seems to be true of both the NCP and SPLM) and its potential negative impact on moving CPA implementation forward and maintaining stability.

¶12. (SBU) USAID will consider logistical and technical support to implement integration and will encourage the participation of other donors if they are better positioned to provide the required support. Embassy Khartoum will continue to engage with the key political actors to push for rapid integration in Southern Kordofan in an effort to head off the slow and steady drift towards violence in the Nuba Mountains.

FERNANDEZ